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ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES FROM
POINT BARROW, ALASKA

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RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, DIVISION OF BIRDS

Since the publication of records of birds collected by Mr. Charles D. Brower in the Point Barrow region¹ Mr. Brower has continued to send birds at intervals both to myself and to Mr. A. M. Bailey. Among these the following seem to be of enough interest to be placed on record.

The numbers in parentheses are those of the specimens in question in my collection. These, and all the rest of my collection, are the property of Field Museum of Natural History, to the authorities of which I wish to express my thanks for the privilege of reporting these notes. All specimens were collected near Point Barrow, by Charles D. Brower, unless otherwise stated, to whom my thanks are due for his discriminating study of the birds found there, and his kindness in sending them to me.

Of especial interest is the fact that of about 140 forms recorded from the northern coast of Alaska about 48 have been taken not over four times, and 34 only once. This would indicate that most of them were lost birds, wandering until they came to the sea. Also it is noteworthy that of about 100 such birds all except five were taken between May and October, though the unfavorable conditions for birds prevailing at Barrow in the winter months may account for part of this seasonal difference. Among these records that of *Hirundo r. rustica* appears to be the first from the mainland of America; *Rhodostethia rosea*, the first ever taken in summer in

¹ A. M. Bailey, C. D. Brower, and L. B. Bishop (1933); A. M. Bailey and L. B. Bishop (1934).

America; and the presence of *Piranga erythromelas* and *P. ludoviciana* may indicate that any of our widely ranging summer residents may be found at Barrow.

Gavia adamsi. YELLOW-BILLED LOON.

Two young in down (51058-9) were collected at Chipp River, July 19, 1939, by Arnold Brower. Mr. Brower informs me these are the first young ever found near Barrow. It is interesting to note that, although adults differ from *Gavia immer* chiefly in the yellow bill, downy young are much closer to *Gavia stellata* in color than to *Gavia immer*. As shown below, *Gavia immer* and *arctica* closely resemble each other as do *Gavia adamsi* and *stellata*, *adamsi* differing also from the other three, which have blackish bills, in having a white and much heavier one.

Gavia adamsi, Chipp River, Alaska, July 19, 1939 (51059), Arnold Brower.

Dark Mars brown above, changing to Prout's brown below, except center of abdomen, which is clear white. Fine lines of Mummy brown extending from gape, passing down throat and around back of neck below auriculars, where it connects with a similar line from eye.

Gavia stellata, Barrow, Alaska, August 6, 1922 (48845), Charles D. Brower.

Mars brown above, changing to paler Prout's brown below, and fading to brownish white over abdomen. Fine lines of Mummy brown from iris to auricular region and back of neck.

Gavia immer elasson, Churchill, Manitoba, July 15, 1938 (50793), Albert L. Wilk.

Hair brown above, changing to drab-gray on crown, flanks and throat; abdomen grayish white. Indistinct band of hair brown from bill to auriculars.

Gavia arctica pacifica, Churchill, Manitoba, July 16, 1934 (50005), A. M. Heydweiler.

Hair brown above, changing to drab-gray on crown, flanks, abdomen and throat. Forehead and space around iris and auriculars pale drab-gray. Band of pale hair brown from gape to auriculars.

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Colymbus auritus. HORNE GREBE.

A female adult was taken on the Chipp River, June 3, 1938 (50837).

Puffinus tenuirostris. SLENDER-BILLED SHEARWATER.

Apparently this shearwater occurs regularly, but usually in small numbers. One was taken on July 20, 1934, a male on September 19, 1935, two females on July 26, 1938, and a male and a female on September 11 and 13, 1941, all near Barrow.

Cygnus columbianus. WHISTLING SWAN.

Two downy young (50839-40) were collected by Thomas B. Brower, near Chipp River, in 1938.

Mareca americana. BALDPATE.

An adult male (50838) was taken at Barrow on May 21, 1938.

Spatula clypeata. SHOVELLER.

A young male (50241), called female by Brower, was taken by him on September 30, 1935. Brower gives this as the first record.

Falco rusticolus alascanus. ALASKA GYRFALCON.

Two gyrfalcons, collected by Charles D. Brower on Flaxman Island, in September, 1934 (male, 50171; female, 50172), are undoubtedly the same race and probably a pair. They resemble closely the plate of *Falco islandicus* in Elliot's *New and Unfigured Species of the Birds of North America*, 2, pl. 31, differing only in having the dark droplets below smaller and fewer, and the upper parts dark mouse gray in the male and fuscous in the female; in both the feathers are edged with pale buff. These birds cannot be *uralensis*, as the chief distinguishing character in this race is having the first (outermost) primary as long as the third, while the first is shorter in 50 other gyrfalcons examined by Hartert (1913, p. 1069). Friedmann (1935, p. 30) says *F. r. alascanus* Swann closely resembles *uralensis* in coloring, as do these birds, and Hartert considers *uralensis* much like the other races of *rusticolus*. All my Alaskan gyrfalcons have the second primary longest and the first shorter than the third. Consequently these birds must be called *F. r. alascanus*, if this race is considered good.

Falco rusticolus candicans seems not to have been reported from Alaska, but an adult female (38794) collected by F. E. Kleinschmidt

at Nome, April 10, 1923, and a young male(?) (18598) taken by A. H. Dunham, also at Nome, June 1, 1907, must be referred to this race. Both birds are almost completely white with a few dark markings both above and below, and resemble the plate of *Falco candicans* of Elliot (op. cit., pl. 30), except for a few dark markings below.

A young female collected by George Willett on Nunivak Island October 13, 1926 (40576), very dark above with the markings chiefly benzo-brown, and very heavily spotted and barred with fuscous below, must be called *F. r. obsoletus*; and a female, probably young, collected by myself at St. Michael September 21, 1899 (4668), chiefly pale drab above and light buff to white, narrow-striped, with fuscous below, must be called *F. r. rusticolus*.

The only conclusion I can draw from these birds is that, though *candicans* and *rusticolus* may be subspecifically distinct, the other races are indistinguishable, the coloring being no guide to a name.

Falco peregrinus anatum. DUCK HAWK.

A yearling male (50161) was collected at Meade River, June 30, 1935.

Falco columbarius bendirei. WESTERN PIGEON HAWK.

A young bird, probably a male (50501), was taken in the Endicott Mountains in September, 1936. This seems to be the most northern record.

Oxyechus vociferus vociferus. KILLDEER.

A male adult collected June 11, 1936, is the first record for Barrow (50466).

Calidris canutus rufus. AMERICAN KNOT.

At Barrow two young (50247-8) were taken on August 29, 1935, and an adult female (50462) on June 11, 1936. On June 17, 1936, Mr. Brower collected four young in the down, and the parent. Two and the parent are in the collection of Major Allan Brooks, and the other two (50463-4) in mine. These downies are remarkably distinct from the downies of *Pisobia melanotos*, *fuscicollis* and *bairdi*, *Ereunetes pusillus* and *mauri*, *Pelidna alpina pacifica*, *Micropalama himantopus*, *Limnodromus griseus scolopaceus*, *Arenaria interpres morinella*, *Squatarola*, *Pluvialis dominica dominica* and *fulva*, with

which I have compared them. The three plovers are easily distinguished by their bills and golden colors above; the turnstones by the lack of white apical spots and confused brown streaking above; the dowitchers by deep brown longitudinal streaking above with white apical spotting. The others all show in varying degree rusty brown above with apical white spots, and this brown suffusion covers most of the lower parts in varying degree, most pronounced in *melanotos*; but the lower parts are plain grayish white in *fuscicollis* and *bairdi*, and the white spots above are smallest and most numerous in *Ereunetes*. Downy *C. c. rufus* agree with *bairdi* in having the lower parts plain grayish white, and the upper parts, as in all these downies except the turnstones, with apical spots to the down, but they differ from all in much larger size and the ground color above snuff brown to Sayal brown.

Arquatella ptilocnemis couesi. ALEUTIAN SANDPIPER.

Thanks to Mr. Wilson C. Hanna of Colton, California, to whom these birds were sent for identification of sets of eggs by the collector, two adults taken at Wales, Alaska, June 21, 1935, and June 9, 1936 (50202 and 50482), are in my collection. The demarcation eastward of this species and *Ereunetes mauri* is near this point, *E. pusillus* replacing *mauri* at Barrow. Apparently about the same condition obtains with the two races of golden plover; the common bird at Barrow is *dominica*, while *fulva* replaces it some 100 miles west. As birds typical of both races breed at Barrow, and I have seen no intergrades, it seems probable both are separate species rather than races, as there is no suitable breeding-ground farther south where intergradation might occur.

Tryngites subruficollis. BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER.

A breeding adult (49916) was collected at Tashikpak June 22, 1934, with a set of four eggs (3659), and another (50190), now in the collection of Mr. Wilson C. Hanna, at Chipp River, July 5, 1934.

Limosa lapponica baueri. PACIFIC GODWIT.

A young bird in down was found at Barrow on July 5, 1936 (50465).

Stercorarius parasiticus. PARASITIC JAEGER.

Three adult males and three adult females were collected at Chipp River, June 10–25, 1940, by Robert Brower (52054–59). This species is apparently much rarer than *S. longicaudus* at Barrow.

Larus hyperboreus. GLAUCOUS GULL.

Three downy young were collected by Robert Brower at Chipp River, July 15, 1939 (52060-2), a pair of breeding adults with eggs, on June 27, 1940, and a male in third year plumage, on July 3, 1940. These birds are of especial interest as proving that *L. barrovianus* is inseparable from *L. hyperboreus*, neither size nor color being distinctive. Mr. Brower has sent me in past years some forty glaucous gulls from Barrow, but none of them were breeding, and might not be the local native race.

Larus thayeri. THAYER'S GULL.

A young bird in juvenile dress was taken at Barrow on October 6, 1935 (50239). The breeding range of this bird is widely separated from that of *L. argentatus*, and it seems quite distinct in all plumages—the shape of the white spot on the second primary differs in adults, and the quills in the young replace the black of *argentatus* by dull gray. Therefore, *thayeri* appears a distinct species. The relationship with *L. glaucescens* seems much closer, as in some adults the size and shape of the subterminal white spot is identical, and birds exist with the primaries intermediate in color between the pale gray of *glaucescens* and the very dark gray of *thayeri*. The truth seems to be that these large northern gulls have been separated specifically only a short time in geological history, and probably both interbreed and revert occasionally to an ancestral type.

On the other hand *Larus kumlieni* seems to me merely a subspecies of *L. leucopterus*, as the gray marking on the outer primary varies from heavy to very small and indistinct, closely approaching the clear white of *leucopterus*.

Rhodostethia rosea. ROSS'S GULL.

Two pairs of this species were shot by a native at a sand-spit at Pond Bay, 40 miles southeast of Barrow, on June 16, 1935. Mr. Brower says that the ova in the females were very small. One pair (50159-60) in my collection are young birds in the second summer. They have the neck ring of the adult summer plumage, and the pearl gray mantle and rectrices of maturity; the white feathers are replacing the spotted ones on the rump, but the juvenal wings and their coverts still persist.

Uria lomvia arra. PALLAS'S MURRE.

A male taken at Barrow, July 29, 1935, and a female on July 25 (50162-3) are in full molt of the primaries.

Brachyramphus brevirostris. KITTLITZ'S MURRELET.

Brower collected a male at Barrow on September 17, 1941 (52626).

Colaptes auratus borealis. BOREAL FLICKER.

A male adult (50841) was collected and skinned by a native on Colville River in 1937. The size of these far northern flickers indicates *borealis* should be accepted.

Chordeiles minor minor. EASTERN NIGHTHAWK.

An adult male (52629) was collected at Barrow, July 6, 1941, by Charles D. Brower. A first record for northern Alaska.

Otocoris alpestris arcticola. PALLID HORNED LARK.

At Barrow an adult female (49920) was collected on May 14, 1934, an adult male (50467) May 27, 1936, and an adult female (50502) in the Endicott Mountains on June 10, 1936.

Tachycineta thalassina lepida. VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW.

An adult male was found dead at Barrow, July 24, 1940 (52065).

Iridoprocne bicolor. TREE SWALLOW.

Two adult males were taken near Barrow on May 12, 1934 (49928), and on June 3, 1939 (51064); and another adult male on the Chipp River (50850) by Thomas Brower, June 20, 1938.

Petrochelidon albifrons albifrons. NORTHERN CLIFF SWALLOW.

An adult female (50476) was collected at Barrow on June 17, 1936. This seems the first record for northern Alaska. The variation in wing length between cliff swallows from southern California, Idaho, British Columbia and this Alaskan bird is so slight and irregular that *P. a. hypopolia* of Oberholser is unnecessary.

Hirundo erythrogaster. BARN SWALLOW.

A female adult was taken at Barrow, June 10, 1938 (50849).

Hirundo rustica rustica. EUROPEAN SWALLOW.

An adult male (49927) was collected at Barrow, June 20, 1934. This is apparently the first record for the continent of North America.

The specimen is typical, having the unbroken neck-ring, the white lower parts and more purplish blue of the upper parts. It shows no tendency toward *H. r. tytleri* of Kamtschatka, the race that might have been expected. In this connection it may be well to place on record an adult female barn swallow collected by me at Little River, Comox, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, August 25, 1940 (45065); it has the more purplish upper parts, and the unbroken dark chest-band of *rustica*, though this is narrower; the abdomen is like that of *erythrogaster*. However, an adult male (45064), taken at the same spot the same day, differs from normal only in having scattered dark feathers at the junction of the neck and breast, while another adult male (49353) taken a few miles away on August 2, 1933, is typical *erythrogaster*. There is still room for study of the barn swallows breeding along the coast of British Columbia and southern Alaska.

Corvus corax principalis. NORTHERN RAVEN.

A young female (49430) was collected for Brower at Collinson Point, 250 miles east of Barrow, on July 10, 1933.

Penthestes atricapillus turneri. YUKON CHICKADEE.

A male taken at Barrow, October 5, 1938 (50887).

Turdus migratorius migratorius. EASTERN ROBIN.

An adult female (49929) was obtained at Barrow, July 14, 1934.

Hylocichla minima aliciae. GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH.

An adult male was taken at Barrow, June 8, 1939 (51066).

Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe. EUROPEAN WHEATEAR.

A pair was collected at Barrow, May 28, 1936 (50480-1).

Cyanocephala suecica. RED-SPOTTED BLUETHROAT.

A male adult was taken at Barrow, June 2, 1934 (49930), and an adult female (50479) on Meade River, May 28, 1936.

Acanthopneuste borealis kennicotti. KENNICOTT'S WILLOW
WARBLER.

A male adult (50853) was collected at Barrow, June 24, 1938, by Thomas Brower. This is the first I have seen from Barrow.

Motacilla flava alascensis. ALASKA YELLOW WAGTAIL.

At Barrow an adult male (50201) on June 23, 1935, a female (51065) on June 14, 1939, and an adult male on Chipp River, June 14, 1938 (50852), were collected.

Anthus spinoletta rubescens. AMERICAN PIPIT.

Two adult females were collected at Barrow, May 28 and 30, 1936 (50477-8), and the parent of a set of eggs in the collection of Wilson C. Hanna (50895) was taken near Chipp River, June 8, 1938.

Wilsonia pusilla pusilla. WILSON'S WARBLER.

A young male was collected at Barrow, September 24, 1938 (50886).

Agelaius phoeniceus arctolegus. GIANT REDWING.

A yearling male (52063) was obtained at Barrow, June 28, 1940.

Euphagus carolinus. RUSTY BLACKBIRD.

A young male (50503) was obtained at Barrow, October 24, 1936.

Piranga ludoviciana. WESTERN TANAGER.

An adult female (50851) was taken at Barrow by Brower, May 24, 1938.

Piranga erythromelas. SCARLET TANAGER.

An adult male (49926) also was collected by Mr. Brower on June 25, 1934. Both these tanagers seem far from home.

Acanthis linaria. COMMON REDPOLL.

The only skin of this species I have seen from Barrow was an adult, probably a female, taken June 12, 1936, sent by Mr. Brower from Meade River to Mr. Wilson Hanna to identify a set of eggs, and kindly presented by him to me (50197). *A. h. exilipes* breeds commonly.

Loxia leucoptera. WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.

An adult male was taken in the Endicott Mountains, in March, 1938 (50885), and sent to me by Mr. Brower.

***Junco hyemalis hyemalis*. SLATE-COLORED JUNCO.**

At Barrow adult males were taken on June 15, 1936 (50474), and May 20, 1938 (50847); young males on September 28, 1933 (50475), and October 3, 1941 (52625); an adult female on June 4, 1934 (49925); and an adult male at Chipp River on May 18, 1939 (51063). I know of no breeding record.

***Spizella arborea ochracea*. WESTERN TREE SPARROW.**

An adult male was collected on May 15 (49922), adult females on May 31 and June 5, 1934 (49923-4), an adult female on June 30, 1935 (50200), and a young female on September 16, 1941 (52630), all near Barrow.

***Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli*. GAMBEL'S SPARROW.**

An unsexed adult (49921) was collected at Barrow, June 2, 1934, and adult males May 30, 1935 (50169), and May 28, 1936 (50472).

***Passerella iliaca iliaca*. EASTERN FOX SPARROW.**

An adult female was collected at Barrow, May 20, 1938 (50848).

***Passerella iliaca unalaschcensis*. SHUMAGIN FOX SPARROW.**

Two males have been taken at Barrow, an adult on July 1, 1933 (49401), and a young bird on October 5, 1935 (50249).

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